



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held April 3, 2007, the Board took the following action:

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The following statement was entered into the record for Supervisors Knabe and Antonovich:

“Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano, 38th District of California, has introduced H.R. 974, the Joseph T. Getherall Medal of Honor Legislation seeking the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor to Joseph T. Getherall, of Hacienda Heights, for acts of valor while serving his country in the Republic of Vietnam on December 22, 1966. This recognition of a courageous Los Angeles County resident is well deserved and long overdue.

“Joseph ‘Joe’ Getherall was a sergeant in the United States Marine Corps who served two tours of duty in Vietnam and was seriously wounded three times during his second tour. In the early morning hours of December 22, 1966, Sergeant Getherall sustained multiple wounds while directing his unit of fellow Marines, exposing himself to intense enemy weapon fire by repeatedly crossing into open terrain to effectively control his unit and fellow Marines. His actions to repeatedly place himself into ‘no man’s land’ while directing return fire, resupply his men with ammunitions and ensure the integrity of the perimeter defense enabled the Marines to hold their position. Sergeant Getherall was responsible for neutralizing numerous enemy combatants by his own rifle fire.

“During one intense fire-fight, Sergeant Getherall personally went into an opened area to rescue a fallen wounded Marine and dragged him to an area of safety from enemy fire. During another assault, Sergeant Getherall observed a Viet Cong about to throw a grenade, and as he shot this enemy, the grenade was still thrown into an area occupied by fellow Marines. Sergeant Getherall was able to retrieve this grenade and throw it from the area of his fellow Marines, sustaining a shrapnel wound to his leg, (his second wounded injury). This action saved several of his squad members from death or serious injury.

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“During the remainder of the night, Sergeant Getherall remained a leader of his unit, by continually encouraging his squad and moving about the area to help repulse repeated attacks from a numerically superior enemy force. By his outstanding leadership, resolute determination and unfaltering devotion to duty in the face of grave personal danger, Sergeant Getherall upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and of the United States Naval Service.

“Due to a military paperwork snafu, the initial commendation for these actions was lost and never processed. By this Bill, a long-time oversight will be able to see a full examination and a justified conclusion to the heroic actions of Sergeant Getherall.

“Since his military duty, Joe Getherall has also served a career with the Los Angeles Police Department serving 30 years where he also distinguished himself with honor. Joe and his family live in Hacienda Heights.

“H.R. 974 seeks to resolve this oversight and provide Los Angeles County hero Joe Getherall with his ‘just rewards’ for valor above and beyond the call of duty. He is deserving of this consideration.”

Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Knabe, seconded by Supervisor Antonovich, unanimously carried, the Executive Officer of the Board was instructed to send a five-signature letter to the Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation, the members of the House Armed Services Committee, and California Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein to:

1. Express the Board’s support of Joseph Getherall’s nomination for the Congressional Medal of Honor for acts of valor while serving his Country in the Republic of Vietnam on December 22, 1966; and

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2. Urge unanimous support of H.R. 974, a bill introduced by Congresswoman Grace F. Napolitano, 38th District of California, that would authorize and request President Bush to award the Medal of Honor to Joseph T. Getherall of Hacienda Heights, for acts of valor while serving in the United States Marine Corps.

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Copies distributed:

- Each Supervisor
- Chief Administrative Officer
- County Counsel
- Director of Military and Veterans Affairs

Letters sent to:

- Each Member, Los Angeles County  
Congressional Delegation
- Each Member, House Armed  
Services Committee
- Senator Barbara Boxer
- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Senator Grace F. Napolitano